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How to Remove Conditioning

The Superpower

of Listening

MARK MILTON

What Is Love?
ICHAK ADIZES







Detox & Rejuvenate



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Seeing every challenge as an opportunity for growth, Dr. Ichak Adizes moved beyond a childhood marked by imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp and immigration to an unfamiliar country to discover the benefits of opening his heart.

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The Accordion Player is a compelling account of a remarkable life — an unvarnished view of a man whose decision to recognize the value of change and creative conflict allowed him to love. His story reveals the enduring human ability to turn possibility into reality.

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Foreword by Daaji

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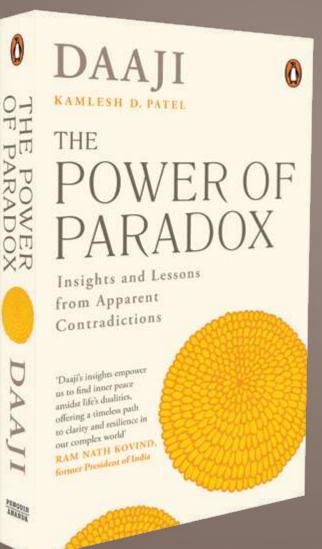
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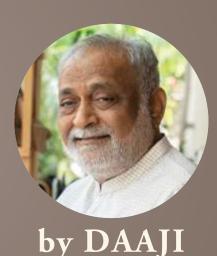


From the bestselling author of The Heartfulness Way and The Wisdom Bridge

THE POWER OF PARADOX

Insights and Lessons from Apparent Contradictions





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Dear readers,

We all appreciate a clean environment, a clean house, clean clothes, a clean body, and clean hair, so what about a clean mind? How often do you give yours a good scrub? The Heartfulness practice of Cleaning is as vital for mental and emotional hygiene as washing your body is for physical hygiene.

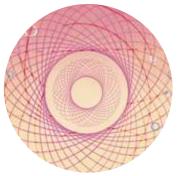
So this month, we explore the many facets of cleaning, detoxification, and purification, and offer you some practices to try. We hear from Daaji, Mark Milton and Ravi Venkatesan, Ichak Adizes, Victor Kannan, Elizabeth Denley, Jason Nutting, and Negin Khorasani. We also feature some of the beautiful birds of the Indian subcontinent through the photography of Rajesh Menon. To share a conservation marvel we hear from ecologist, B. Rathinasabapathy, and to celebrate World Storytelling Day we have a tale of tales for children from Sara Bubber.

Next month, we'll be taking up the topic of Attitudes. We would love to hear from you, so please share your letters, articles, and stories with us at contributions@heartfulnessmagazine.com.

Happy reading, The editors























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Negin is a social entrepreneur and activist, who is committed to inner change. She is also a writer, a dreamer, a consciousness and communication coach, and an educator. She has been meditating for a long time, and rejoices in supporting others to get in touch with their inner being.



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Mark is the Founder of Education 4 Peace, a Swiss-based foundation that promotes the integration of self-awareness, quality presence, and active listening into educational curriculums for youth. He is part of the founding team of the Spirit of Humanity Forum, a biennial event held in Reykjavik, Iceland, and is also a published author.



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Ravi is an Atlanta-based executive, who currently serves as CEO at Cantaloupe (Nasdaq:CTLP). He is a regular public speaker on Presentation, Negotiation, Empathetic Leadership, Technology, and Wellness. Ravi is also a regular panelist, podcaster, and keynote speaker on leadership topics at events.



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Victor has been an avid practitioner of Heartfulness Meditation and a trainer for more than 30 years. As a career CFO he has been able to combine the benefits of meditation in the everyday management of his duties and responsibilities. He lives with his wife in Atlanta and has a daughter.



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Rathinasabapathy is an ecologist who has led significant ecological projects, e.g., the restoration of Adyar Eco Park, the conservation of the endangered Rudraksha tree, and numerous plantation and greening efforts across the Western Ghats and East Coast. He has authored 15 books and over 55 research papers.



RAJESH MENON

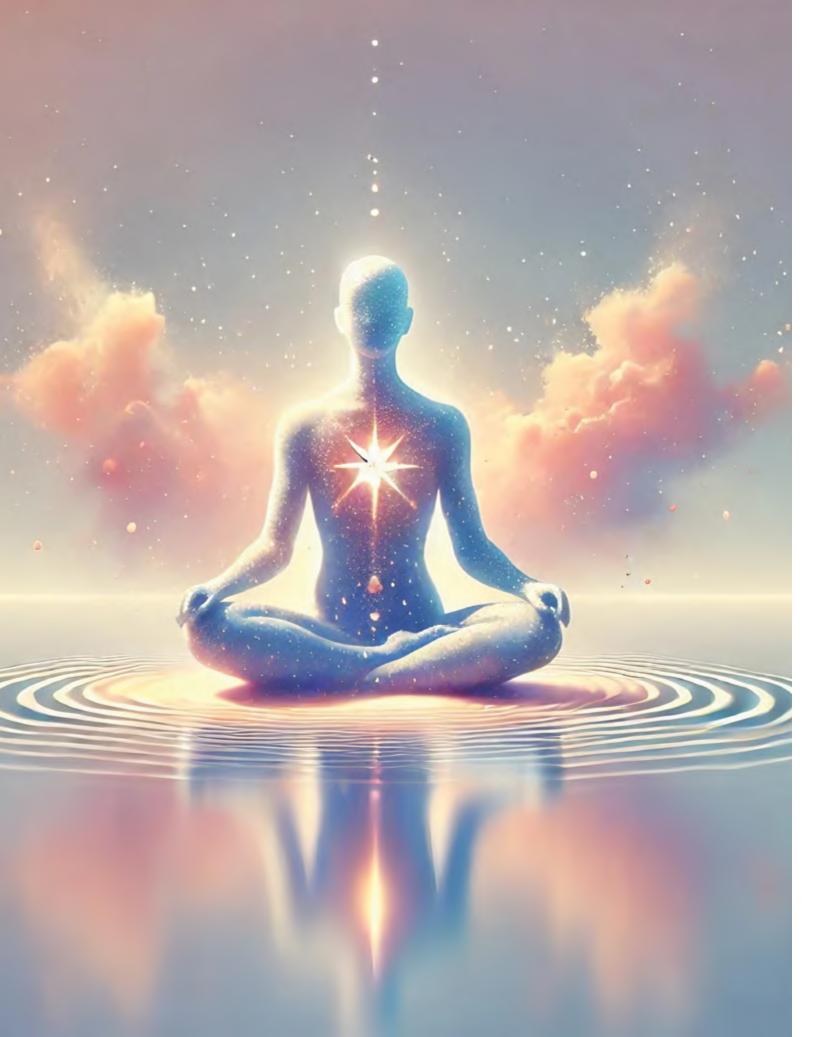
Rajesh is a nature photographer and conservationist, whose work showcases Rajasthan, the Himalayas, including Spiti in Himanchal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bhutan and Nepal, and the north-east of India.



SARA BUBBER

Sara is a storyteller, Montessori consultant, and a children's book author. She is also a naturalist, doing her doctoral work in ecoconsciousness in childhood. She has been practicing Heartfulness for eight years and is a certified trainer.





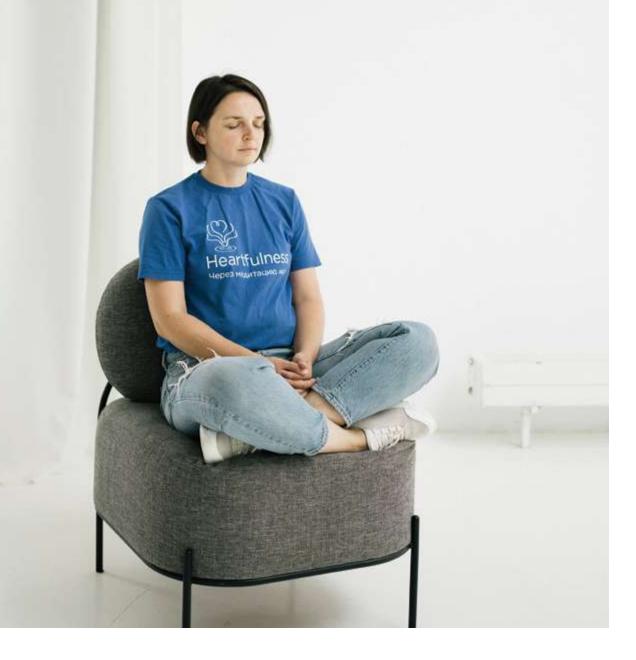
In the waters of purity, I melted like salt, Neither blasphemy, nor faith, nor conviction, nor doubt remained.

In the center of my heart a star has appeared, And all the seven heavens have become lost in it.

RUMI

On Cleaning

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES FOR MODERN LIVING



In the third episode of the series, DAAJI answers some of the most common questions he receives about the Heartfulness practice of Cleaning.

e are programmed based upon our past impressions such that all kinds of things can cause us to open and close. If you pay attention, you will see it happen regularly throughout each day."

—Michael Singer

I will start by sharing the results of a popular study done in 1954 and published in the *Journal* of Psychopathology and Clinical Science: The football fans of Dartmouth and Princeton were given a questionnaire after they watched a recording of a particularly rough game between their teams, as the researchers wanted to understand what the fans thought happened in the game. The results were so variable that the "game" was many different games. The fans had different versions of events, and each version was just as real to each

person. Each fan had their own version of reality.

Since then, a large body of research has shown that we see the world through our own filters. Our attitudes, beliefs, and biases define our perception. All of us have this kind of conditioning. We have many blind spots, which stem from our likes and dislikes. They may seem harmless, but our likes and dislikes hijack our awareness. Most of the chatter going on in our minds is because of the constant stream of likes and dislikes.

Next time you are in a busy place, like a restaurant, a crowded street, or an airplane, try this experiment. Watch your thoughts as you observe people boarding the flight. Listen to the chatter of likes and dislikes as you observe their looks, what they wear, what they carry, how

they talk, how they stow away their luggage, and so on. Most of us are unconsciously judging ourselves and others. With the Cleaning practice, we can move from judgment to acceptance to compassion to love.

For that journey to be successful, we need to remove the conditioned patterns within us. That conditioning is like channels formed by rainwater. When water flows over the same ground, it forms a channel. Over time, this channel widens and develops into a gushing river. Once the channel forms, that is the only path the water takes. Our likes and dislikes cause impressions that carve patterns of behavior in us. How we think, react, and what we like or dislike are all the result of these impressions. Yogis call these impressions samskaras.

SELF-CARE SELF-CARE

What is being removed in the Heartfulness Cleaning practice?

The life that many of us lead is governed by those habits and patterns unfolding in front of us. The life we wish to lead will emerge once the impressions are cleaned.

So Heartfulness Cleaning is the way to remove the impressions—the impurities and complexities we accumulate

on a daily basis. They are the emotional "charge" of our experiences, and the emotional residue that lingers from our past and our memories. Over time, impressions become fixed as tendencies, causing us to become habitual in our reactions and behavior. They prevent us from being free.

With the daily Cleaning practice, we become lighter day by day. When we clean the impressions, we remove

the filters that distort our perception. These impressions settle in all the layers of the subconscious, where they cover the soul. They separate us from the center of our being. As this network becomes denser, it resembles layers like geological sedimentation. And like archaeology, they become a record of our past. The Cleaning process removes the layers, so we are free to design our own destiny.

The deeper result is that the practice of Cleaning creates space inside the heart, and this space automatically attracts
Transmission. This is one of the reasons for the three introductory sessions with a trainer on commencing the Heartfulness practices.
In those initial sessions, the trainer removes impurities and complexities from your system, creating more lightness within. Over time, you will experience greater vacuity and lightness,

The Cleaning process removes the layers, so we are free to design our own destiny.



which will in turn direct the flow of divine energy toward you to a greater extent.

Do I need to recall all the happenings of the day before throwing them out?

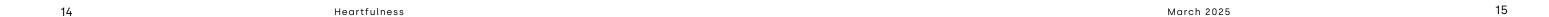
A unique aspect of Cleaning is that we don't focus on what is being removed. Recalling daily events will only deepen their impact. We don't need to relive the past by bringing it into our awareness. Instead, we offer a non-judgmental affirmation that all impurities and complexities are being removed. It's a refreshing dip in the waters of purity and love, and we emerge rejuvenated.

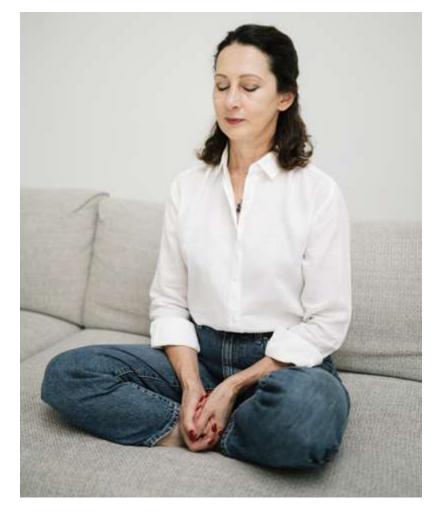
When should I practice Cleaning?

As Cleaning removes the accumulated impressions of the day, it is best done in the evening, after you have finished the majority of the day's work. It is like taking a shower to wash off the day's dirt, but this time for the mind.

Cleaning requires alertness, so it is best not to put it off until bedtime, when you are too sleepy to clean properly. Another reason not to postpone Cleaning is that it creates such freshness in us that if you do it too close to bedtime you may be too alert to sleep. Also, with the better state acquired after cleaning, your interactions with family members will witness many refined changes.

You can also do "spot" Cleaning at any time during the day, as needed. If you spill ketchup on your shirt in the morning, do you wait till the evening to clean it? Similarly, if something destabilizes you during the day, take a few minutes and wash away its effect right then and there. Spot Cleaning may be done sitting, standing, or walking, with





eyes open or closed, depending on circumstances. Make the subtle suggestion to yourself that the impression is leaving from the back, restoring the heart and mind to its normal balanced condition. Then you will not have to carry around the heavy burden of that stain on your consciousness for the entire day.

Suppose I miss the Cleaning routine in the evening, what can I do? If you miss the chance to complete the Cleaning in the evening, you can do it just before going to bed. If you are too tired then, do the Cleaning before your Meditation in the morning.

Is it possible to clean away certain ailments?

For ailments, it is recommended that you try the Heartfulness Relaxation. At the end of the process, revisit the affected

Make the subtle suggestion to yourself that the impression is leaving from the back, restoring the heart and mind to its normal balanced condition.

organ and allow the energy from Mother Earth to flow there. Spend more time with that organ, and if necessary you can gently touch the same with your hands and allow the energy to comfort the organ or the region.

Also, during Cleaning, you may make the additional suggestion, "In addition to all impurities and complexities, I am also being relieved of this troubling ailment." Of course, this is not a substitute for regular health intervention by medical professionals.



Heartfulness Cleaning

Do the cleaning practice at the end of your day's work, ideally around sunset and preferably not too close to bedtime. This process will rejuvenate you and purify your system of any accumulated heaviness. There are a few steps to the process, so in the beginning it is best to practice them in the following sequence:

Sit in a comfortable position with the intention to remove all the impressions accumulated during the day.

Close your eyes and relax.

Imagine all the impurities and complexities are leaving your entire system.

Let them flow out from your back in the form of smoke, from the area between your tailbone (at the base of your spine) and the top of your head.

Remain alert during the entire process without brooding over the thoughts and feelings that arise. Try to remain a witness to your thoughts.

Gently accelerate this process with confidence and determination.

If your attention drifts and other thoughts come to mind, gently bring your focus back to the cleaning.

As the impressions are leaving from your back you will start to feel lighter.

Continue this process for up to twenty to twenty-five minutes.

When you feel light within, you can start the second part of the process:

Feel a current of purity coming from the Source entering

your system from the front. This current is flowing into your heart and throughout your system, saturating every particle.

You have now returned to a more balanced state. Every particle of your body is emanating lightness, purity, and simplicity.

Finish with the conviction that the cleaning has been completed effectively.

WHEN Heart Speaks **JASON NUTTING**

JASON NUTTING shares his reflections on the nature of thoughts, and how to move from a first reaction in any circumstance to allowing space for the heart to speak and wisdom to emerge from within by slowing down, clearing the noise, removing the weight of the past, and connecting and aligning with something greater.

he quality of your life is
determined by the quality of
your thoughts."

-Marcus Aurelius

But what if the thoughts that shape your life aren't truly yours?

Every moment, a thought arises. It comes fast, automatic, familiar. This is the thought shaped by past experiences, habits, and subconscious conditioning. It's not a choice; it's a reflex.

Let's call this your First Thought.

But what happens after that?

The moment between the first thought and your next move is where freedom lives.

That is where transformation happens.

That is a space where the heart speaks.

The first thought is not necessarily wise, true, or aligned with who you ought to be. It is simply familiar.

Your habitual state, your baseline level of energy and awareness, shapes this first thought. It's how you normally feel, think, and respond to life.

But when stress, pressure, or unexpected challenges arise, you enter an activated state, a surge in energy where emotions heighten, the mind speeds up, and old survival patterns take control.

This is when fear, self-doubt, and defensiveness arise most strongly.

Without awareness, the first thought in this state feels like the truth. But it's just a reaction.

This is why space matters. This is where freedom begins.

It is the mind on autopilot, reacting to life based on past programming.

 You feel resistance before trying something new.

First thought: "I can't do this."

• You get triggered in a conversation.

First thought: "They don't respect me."

• You set a goal and doubt creeps in.

First thought: "I've failed before. Why bother?"

The first thought often comes from fear, survival, or the ego's need for control. It is the conditioned self, the closed mind, repeating its old stories.

And if you act on it immediately, you reinforce the closed mind.

Now, here's the shift:

You don't have to obey the first thought.

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SELF-CARE

Imagine a moment of struggle... perhaps frustration, doubt, or the pull of an old habit.

The first thought arises automatically.

But then, there's a pause. A breath. A heartbeat.

And from that space, a new voice emerges:

"What if I try?"

"What if I respond with love?"

"What if I trust?"

This voice is quieter but deeper... more like a whisper.

It does not push or force like the mind.

It simply knows.

That is the heart speaking.

The heart does not rush. It does not react. It does not repeat old patterns.

It responds from a place of wisdom, presence, and truth.

But to hear it, you must create space.

The heart's wisdom is always present, but most people never access it because they move too fast.

They react before they receive.



The heart's wisdom is always present, but most people never access it because they move too fast.

This is why Heartfulness practice is helpful, as it slows you down so the heart can lead. Each aspect of the practice helps cultivate this awareness:

- 1. Meditation—clears the noise so you can hear the heart.
- 2. Cleaning—creates space by removing the weight of negative thinking, and old conditioning.
- 3. Prayerful Connection—
 aligns you with something greater, attuning the heart to wisdom beyond the intellect.

Through daily practice, something deeper happens:

The Second Thought, the one shaped by awareness, intuition, and deeper intelligence, begins to arise more effortlessly.

This is the blooming of the lotus flower within you.

And over time, it replaces the first thought.

This is the path of transformation.

At first, this process requires conscious effort.

You must pause. You must listen. You must choose to let the heart lead. But as you practice, the shift becomes natural.

One day, you realize:

Your first response to a challenge is trust, not fear.
Your first reaction to stress is calm, not panic.
Your first impulse in relationships is love, not defensiveness.

The second thought has become the first.

This is the true integration of heart and mind.

It is no longer a battle between impulse and wisdom.

It is harmony.

This is the work...

Slow down.
Clear the noise.
Remove the weight of past conditioning.
Connect and align with something greater.

Each practice helps to recognize the space between thoughts and allows the heart to lead.

And over time, the heart's voice is no longer the second thought.

It is the first. We learn how to lead from the heart once again.

Each practice
helps to
recognize the
space between
thoughts and
allows the heart

This is not a theory.

It is a practice.

to lead.

The question is:

Will you listen?

If this resonates with you, take a moment today to pause.

When a thought arises, don't react immediately.

Connect to your heartbeat for a breath or two.

Create space.

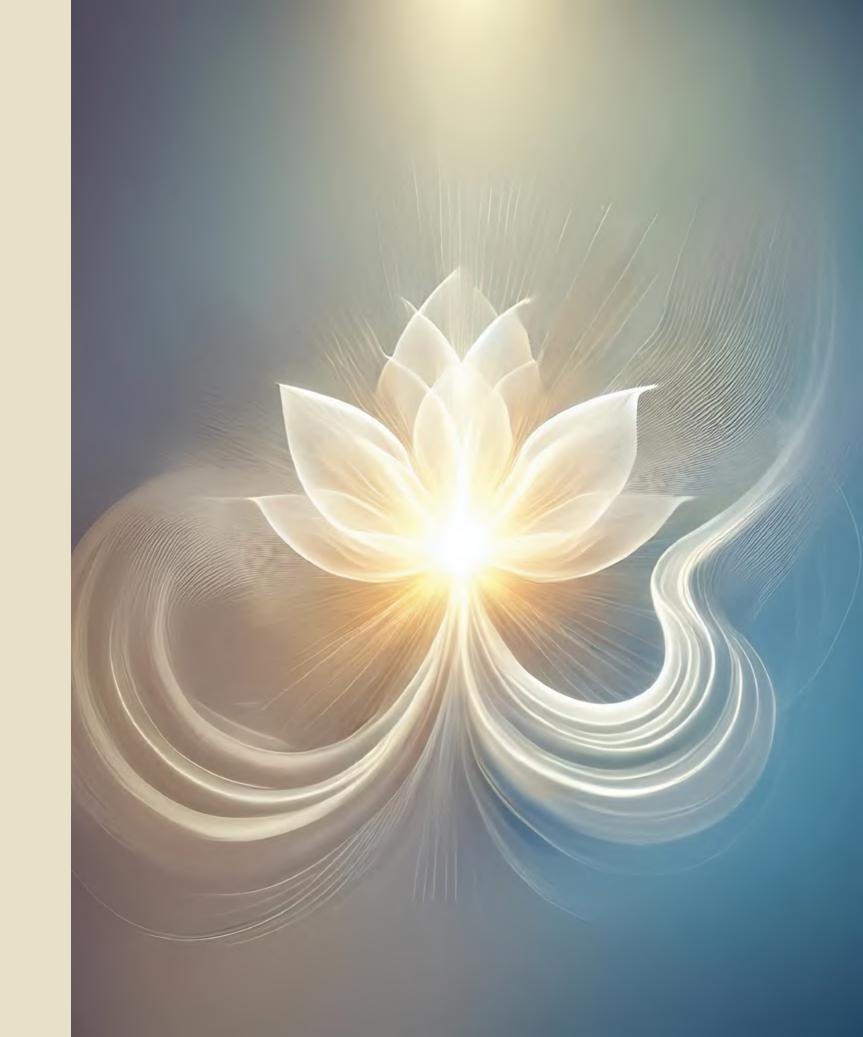
And listen.

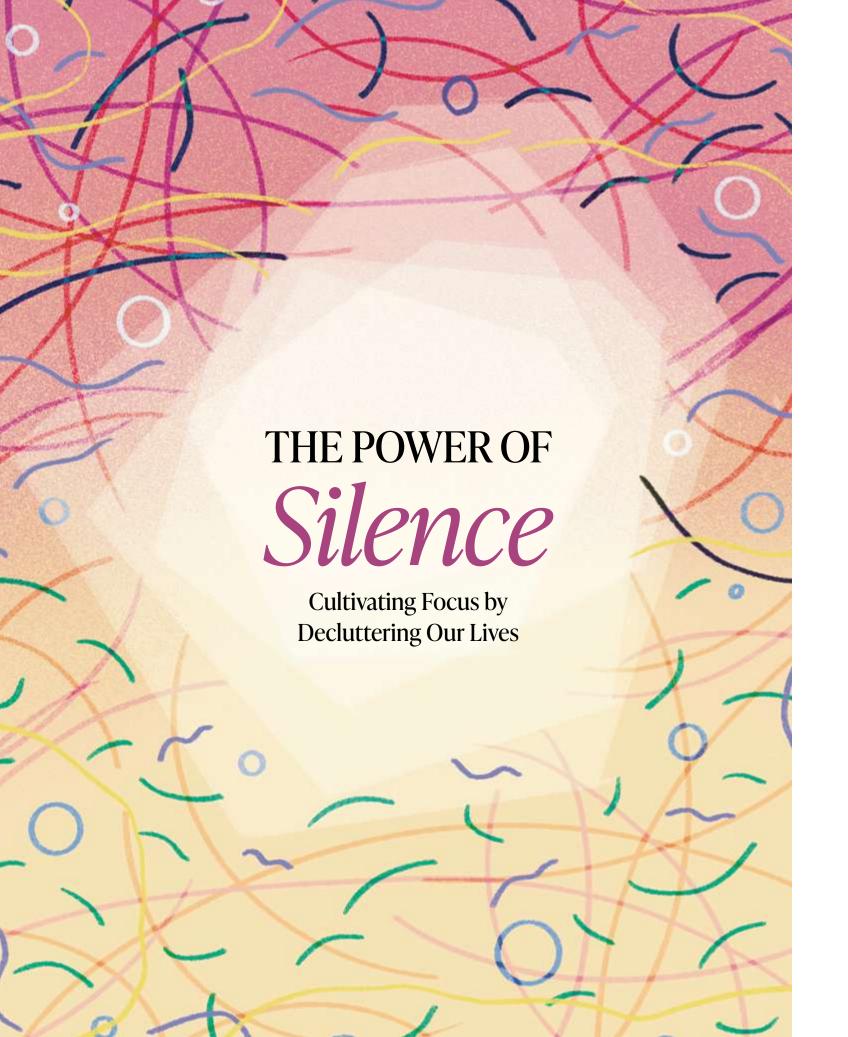
The heart has always been speaking. Slow down, and you will hear it.

Ready to experience this shift?

The principle of purity is based on the thought that the Eternal and pure Existence which we have to enter into is entirely free from all contaminations. It is perfectly pure. This highest standard of absolute purity, free from all impurities (mala), distortions (vikshepa), and coverings (avarana), is taken up as the ideal.

BABUJI





VICTOR KANNAN reflects upon the connection among focus, silence, and space. The more we develop these attributes the more we understand ourselves and others at deeper and deeper levels. The deeper we go, the more our inner spiritual journey unfolds before us.

n our modern, fast-paced world, the ability to focus has become a rare commodity. Distractions are ubiquitous, ranging from cluttered physical spaces and overloaded digital screens to jampacked calendars and emotional entanglements. However, there is a direct connection among focus, silence, and the space we create within ourselves and our surroundings. By intentionally managing this space, we can cultivate clarity, efficiency, and a deeper spiritual awareness.

Silence and focus

Silence is not merely the absence of noise; it is a state of being that allows us to access clarity and peace. When we reduce our involvement and interest in external distractions and random curiosities, we create a fertile ground for focused attention.
Focus and attention are abilities that we naturally discover when we remove the intrusions that tend to stampede our minds.

When we take the time to pause and introspect, we can identify what serves us, and what is just a distraction. We can consciously reduce the proliferation of these unwanted and unnecessary attractions of sensory objects, ideas, events; even people. Make a list of these distractions. You will find them mostly related to your tendencies, which express themselves in your behaviors. In all of us, such behaviors are protected by our defensiveness and our lack of acceptance of the need to change.

Create space for silence

Silence is inherently tied to the space we create, both externally and internally. Physically, an uncluttered environment fosters calmness and order. When our surroundings are chaotic, they mirror and amplify internal disarray. Organizing our spaces, whether our desks or digital devices, creates a sense of ease that enhances focus.

Internally, creating space involves letting go of unnecessary emotional baggage, outdated beliefs, and endless mental chatter. Heartfulness and Mindfulness meditative techniques, and journaling, are conducive ways of allowing us to observe our thoughts without attachment. The

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more internal space we cultivate, the more room we leave for silence and, in turn, for focus.

Consider this: a room filled to the brim with clutter or odds and ends can feel tiresome to stay in. It exudes the vibrations that caused the clutter. Are we hiding things under the bed? Are we stashing away things we never use in corners, to simply gather dust? These things represent fear, confusion, chaos, and lack of focus. These thought vibrations, protected by the things we have kept there, affect our mind constantly when we occupy those spaces. The space in our mind is constantly encroached. A cluttered mind, like a cluttered room, is a cacophony of fragmented thoughts and unprocessed emotions, which in turn create noise, contaminating the inner space, jamming the signals, and diminishing our ability to see clearly. Lack of focus becomes our permanent condition and state of being.

Avoid clutter: A holistic approach

Clutter comes in many forms.

Physical clutter, such as unused items or disorganized workspaces, distracts and drains energy.

Digital clutter, like an overload of apps or notifications, fragments our attention. Similarly, an overcrowded calendar filled with commitments can leave little room for reflection or spontaneity.

Silence is not merely the absence of noise; it is a state of being that allows us to access clarity and peace. When we reduce our involvement and interest in external distractions and random curiosities, we create a fertile ground for focused attention.

Emotional clutter—lingering resentment, unresolved conflicts, and excessive emotional involvement—also takes up valuable internal space. Mental clutter, such as the constant need to impress others, or to recall unnecessary details, or add ifs and buts to more thoroughly explain a situation that is quite plain for everyone else, inhibits our ability to live in the present.

By avoiding clutter, we open pathways to silence, which enables focus. Minimalism, time management, and emotional detachment are not just practical strategies but transformative practices that create harmony in every facet of life.

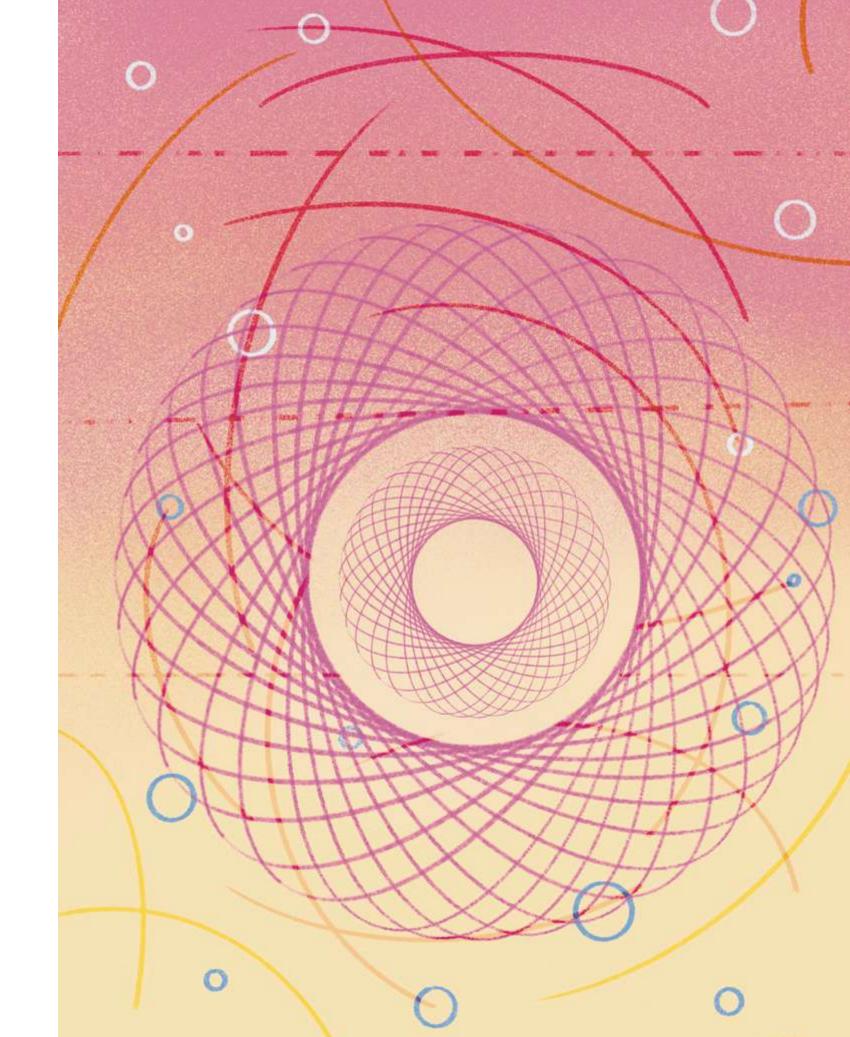
The spiritual connection

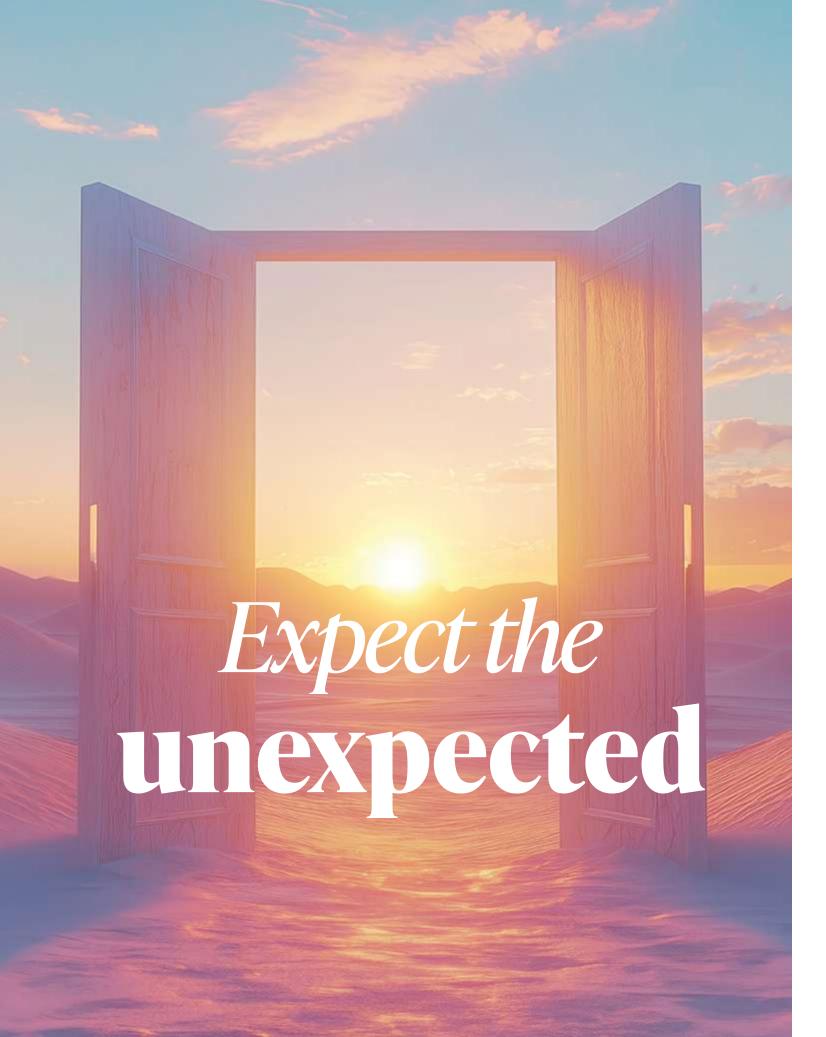
As we declutter and simplify, we naturally shift from superficial distractions to a deeper understanding of ourselves.

Our ability to focus is directly related to the silence we keep. Silence is directly related to the internal space we create in our hearts and minds, while space is directly related to the clutter we avoid by choosing a conscious lifestyle. The clutter we create and find ourselves in makes us wonder who let the dogs in but ourselves. This applies to physical spaces, digital apps on our screens, events on our calendars, emotional entanglements, the tendency to form impressions, etc. The more of these we are able to filter out of our lives, the smoother our journey to spiritual betterment.

For more insight into these aspects, please read the chapter on "Less is More" in Daaji's recent book, *The Power of Paradox*.

Illustrations by ANANYA PATEL





ELIZABETH DENLEY describes how Heartfulness Cleaning has evolved over time, a good reminder that it is a dynamic method that continues to unfold and bring new awareness and insight. Along with that also comes awe at the potential of the human mind.

fter decades of practicing Heartfulness, you may think there is little more to discover, but I'm still filled with wonder whenever something unexpected and astounding emerges on this inner journey. It may be something I already know at a certain level, but then experience at a deeper level of consciousness and therefore with a deeper understanding. Those lightbulb moments are so joyful.

In January and early February this year, something new happened around the process of Cleaning, which is the detoxification practice done in the evening to remove the mental and emotional baggage and heaviness that has accumulated during the day.

When I first started Heartfulness, I was so impressed with the Cleaning that I would sit every evening for 30 minutes; it was better than any therapy session. Subconscious images, sounds, feelings, remembrances, and a growing awareness of how different strands of life were

intertwined rose to the surface and left, effortlessly. Sometimes it meant emotional discomfort, but I wanted the limitations of the past to be gone, so discomfort was a small price to pay. I wanted to experience life beyond those limitations.

Every evening, during that practice, I felt a load shift, and I would write reams in my journal. Every week, when I had a meditation session with a trainer, I would feel a bigger load shift. Every time I joined the group meditations, I realized that layers of experience were being sifted and dislodged so as to reach the treasure at the center of my being. Dreams became pointers to impressions that were being cleaned from my system. Everything was working to remove the complexities. I remember the first time I sat for meditation with a thoughtless still mind, and realized that an enormous amount of inner work had been done in such a short time, for which there was deep gratitude.

Every evening, during that practice, I felt a load shift, and I would write reams in my journal. Every week, when I had a meditation session with a trainer, I would feel a bigger load shift. Every time I joined the group meditations. I realized that layers of experience were being sifted and dislodged so as to reach the treasure at the center of my being.

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As a scientist, it was an amazing experience to witness this inner work that went deeper than anything I had known in psychology or any other spiritual system.

As a scientist, it was an amazing experience to witness this inner work that went deeper than anything I had known in psychology or any other spiritual system. The resulting changes were life-transforming.

Over the weeks, the months, the years, and the decades, that intensity would wax and wane, like all natural processes and rhythms. At times Cleaning required less intensity, less duration, because there was space and stillness. Then the intensity would increase for as long as needed. Over time, the process of Cleaning became less forceful, subtler, and it felt light and effortless. Then, this year something different happened.

In the second half of January, I noticed I was sitting for Cleaning like clockwork for at least 30 minutes most evenings. It wasn't intended; more like someone else was the doer or natural processes were at play. Each session was intense and raw, a review of those periods of this life and past lives that had been buried, in lucid,

vivid detail, sometimes visually like a movie, sometimes simply as memories, feelings, and emotions, and always with the same intensity without any filters and at great speed. Sometimes it was uncomfortable.

Looking back at those events, decisions made, and things that today seem so ludicrous and purposeless, my life appeared ridiculous, I appeared ridiculous. A life without a higher purpose appeared ridiculous. I remembered both wonderful and stupid things, but it was all without weight, a prelude. It was not negative, and at times I was smiling at the absurdity and ridiculousness of it all. It was very liberating after the initial discomfort. There was nothing to hold onto, and nothing worth retaining. The identity, the ego, is just a tool to evolve, not what gives meaning to existence.

Deep philosophical thoughts about the purpose and flow of eternal existence, the meaning of various experiences, and the practice of Cleaning itself—of replacing human vibrations with divine vibrations—all happened at indeterminate speed during these Cleaning sessions. It was a

complete reset, and felt as though the practice had been upgraded.

This occurred during the days

leading up to a big event in our community, the celebration of the birth anniversary of Lalaji, the first Heartfulness Guru, from February 1 to 3. On each day, there were group meditations with Daaji, during which I experienced some of the same raw intensity and cleaning, but always the meditations plunged into nothingness and no being. It was a lighter state than I remember experiencing before. It was not beautiful, because it didn't have qualities. There was no blissful intoxication, no profound awareness or insight, and nothing to attach to; yet in that there was a joy and freedom that cannot be described. It was a state so still, so clear, full of potential movement that subsided, re-emerged, subsided, re-emerged. The potential in nothing-ness was riveting.

Looking back, none of this awareness would have been possible without the intense preparation that happened in the days leading up to the event. The experience is still being absorbed a week after the celebration ended. Life has changed and words can't describe that change. One thing I can say is that true awareness is only possible when it is not tethered, because only then is it universal and able to flow freely.

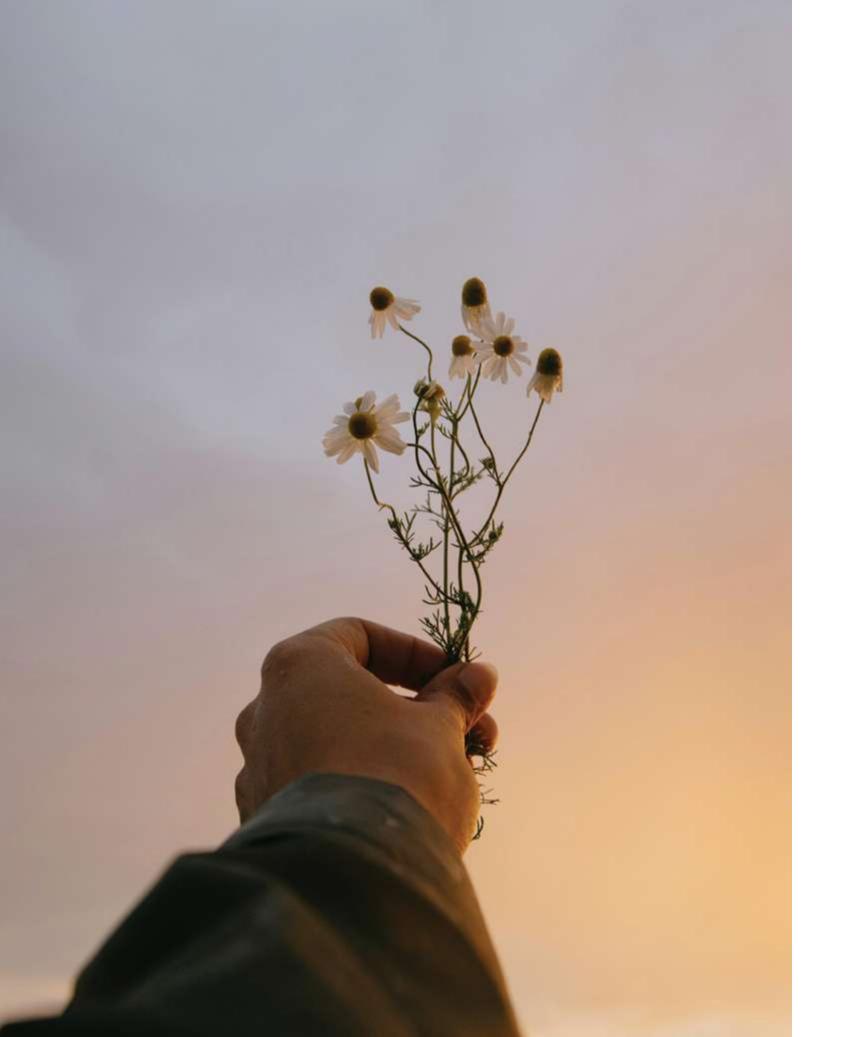
The simplest of practices keep unfolding in unimaginable ways.

Otherwise it is "colored," attached to some pull or push. It may even be an evolutionary pull or push, something useful, like the love for a mother, the love for a Guru, the love for God. They are stepping stones, catalysts to take us where the divine current flows without weight, without pulls and pushes.

Apart from the wonder of the experience itself, the last month has been a reminder that each Heartfulness practice continues to evolve into something deeper and more potent over time. The instructions remain the same, but it is done at a different level. And that sometimes happens in a leap, not always as a gradual change. Over the years, I have often said that Cleaning doesn't happen the way it did earlier, but now that statement has taken on a whole new meaning.

I often pinch myself that life has led to such a profound and dynamic method for transformation. The simplest of practices keep unfolding in unimaginable ways.

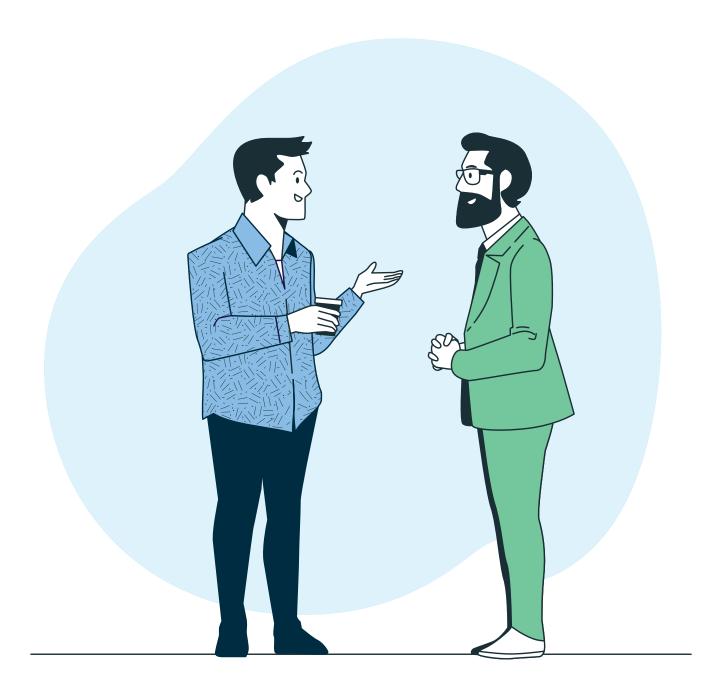
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Manifest plainness, Embrace simplicity, Reduce selfishness, Have few desires.

LAO TZU

The Superpower of LISTENING



In this new series, RAVI VENKATESAN delves into reflective listening, active listening, deep listening, professional listening, and the art of interpreting non-verbal cues. He explores the inward journey of listening to one's own thoughts and feelings, culminating in the profound practice of listening to one's heart. He provides a holistic framework and practical tools to help you evolve your listening skills, transforming them into a superpower that enhances relationships, leadership efficacy, and personal growth.

What better way to start this series than to listen to an expert on listening? Ravi interviews MARK MILTON, social entrepreneur and founder of Education 4 Peace (www.e4p.org), who brings over three decades of professional listening experience, including as President of IFOTES (2001-2010), an international federation of more than 30 National Associations of Telephone Emergency Services working on mental and emotional health promotion and suicide prevention. The high stakes of suicide prevention require extensive training and developing an extraordinary level of listening skills.

"When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know.

But if you listen, you may learn something new."

—The Dalai Lama

The journey to becoming a social entrepreneur

Ravi: Mark, what is a social entrepreneur, and what made you become one?

Mark: I perceive a social entrepreneur as someone who's

putting energy and creativity into building something that has a social impact. An entrepreneur essentially builds something, and the social dimension is that it is for the common good, basically outside of self-interest. The intention is to serve.

Ravi: Nice! What took you down this path? Did you always have this aspiration or was there an event or turning point in your life?

Mark: When you look back, you see milestones. One key milestone was in my late 20s. I was in a good position at a Swiss watch company,

doing well. I was just married, and was driving home one evening in my nice convertible sports car. My wife was waiting for me at home, and I thought, wow, this is amazing. I'm not even 30, we just need children, and my life is successful.

That night, I couldn't sleep! I sensed a calling from another dimension, something beyond business, drawing me toward a place where I could selflessly serve and contribute to life.

When you start asking yourself questions, it leads to spaces where you ask deeper questions about

your life, and things happen, things manifest. A very close friend told me, "I'm a listener on a suicide prevention hotline," and that was the beginning of a journey for me: a year after that I was trained to become a listener on the suicide prevention hotline.

It was a turning point, because I realized how learning to truly listen changes your life. You start to listen not just to other people, but also to yourself and your environment. So, I thought, "How come we don't teach children how to listen at school?" And that's how I got started.

The importance of listening

Ravi: That's incredible. It fascinates me that when I talk to people about developing listening skills, they look at me as if I've got horns: "What do you mean? Everybody knows how to listen!" Most people take it for granted and don't view it as a skill to be learned, a quality to be developed, or something to focus their attention on and spend time mastering. Why do you think we've ended up as a society where something so critical is ignored? In your case, on the suicide prevention hotline, your listening skills probably saved lives. Why do you think we've ended up as a society where we don't teach it?

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Mark: Even in sacred texts like the Bible, there is a lot from our ancestors around listening. You can consider listening as just hearing, "I hear you, I understand what you're saying," or you can go to the other extreme, which is "Am I hearing life, am I listening to what life is inviting?" You can look at listening through very different perspectives.

In my understanding, for the last 20-plus years, there has been a big shift in human communication. At the end of the 20th century, which was also the end of the last millennium, something happened. Emotional intelligence, resilience, positive psychology, etc., started to become important. In a world that used to belong to science,

we now find that self-awareness, mindfulness, meditation, and yoga are mainstream. Twenty years ago they weren't common. Together with this, there is the dimension of healing. With all the suffering happening around the world, there is a growing collective awareness that healing is necessary, Covid certainly helped to spread this awareness.

At one point or another in our lives, we all need healing. We all go through suffering. Our parents did, and our ancestors did. The awareness around listening and healing is growing. In the last 20 years, what we called soft skills—social and emotional skills—have grown into business. There's probably no business school in the world that doesn't have a program on soft skills. Twenty years ago this wasn't the case.

When I started the Education 4 Peace Foundation in 2002, we were looking for schools programs on social and emotional skills, and we found only a few in Finland and Australia. Today there are tens of thousands of programs all over the world. So, to go back to your question, it's important to take the perspective that this huge change has happened only in the last 20 years in human communication.



You are your main tool when you're listening. You can't develop your listening without self-awareness. It is an ongoing process, a life process; even though people get diplomas, it is a neverending story.

Types of listening

Listening involves learning how to truly engage with someone, and there are different types of listening. In the perspective of two dimensions, one is active listening and the other is listening with empathy. These two different forms of listening both have in common the fact that they develop the awareness, the discernment, of where you are when you're listening. Are you truly going into the other's world, thoughts, beliefs, and emotions, or are you listening, comparing with your experience, or already sometimes thinking about what you're going to answer when the person stops? That's not active listening.

So just learning to be fully present with someone is something we can all learn, but we haven't been taught, and it isn't about psychotherapy. Every parent can learn this, every manager can learn it, and we all can learn this.

Ravi: I get goosebumps when you say this, because I think it is the biggest barrier to effective listening. It relies on us being able to restrain our own mind from generating a bunch of ad hoc thoughts that take away our attention. To your point, the biggest drawback is how to restrain, and not think about how to respond and react. How have you dealt with this issue? How do you get your mind to a place

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where you say, "Hey, pause, I don't need your voice from inside because I'm paying attention to another person's voice from outside and giving it my full attention and focus, so shut up for a while"?

Mark: I would like to make the parallel with meditation. When we learn to meditate, we become the observer of our thoughts, so we create a space between our thoughts, and that space creates blissful moments. Because of this, we suddenly feel this deep and inner peace. That's where we live with ourselves when we meditate.

When we learn how to truly listen to someone, we do the same practice. Rather than being our thoughts inside our minds with ourselves, we start to catch our minds having an opinion, a point of view, or imagining what we want to answer. It's a reset; we need to reprogram our default modes.

The great and amazing thing about learning to listen on a suicide prevention hotline is that you hear intense reality. You have people on the line who are suffering very deeply. You become very alert and think, "Should I answer something, or should I just be present? What am I doing with my mind, what am I doing with my energy?" You learn to develop a quality of presence, realizing that even without thinking and talking

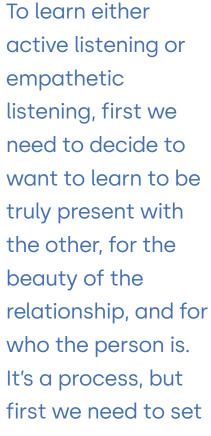
there is a deep value in being a fully-hearted presence with someone.

Ravi: It resonates right away,

somehow mysteriously, even though you are not necessarily saying anything. Even though you are on a telephone, the other person feels when you are present, when they have the gift of your attention versus when they don't. I've never been able to understand it, but I know it works, maybe because we are all linked at some quantum level. I have found that people know when you're paying attention versus when you're not. My wife certainly does! So, how do you think that works?

Mark: There's a key. We used to say among people who worked on the helpline that when you are really with someone on the phone you can even hear their eyebrows move. You are sensing and feeling the energy of the other. The key is intention. Often, when we listen to people, our intention is not focused on the quality of connection with the other; it's focused on the ideas we have. We want to know if what we believe is true or not, or we focus on ideas we want to get through. We usually have an intention that is connected with our needs. To learn either active listening or empathetic listening, first we need to decide to want to learn to be truly present with the other,

active listening or empathetic listening, first we need to decide to want to learn to be truly present with the other, for the beauty of the relationship, and for who the person is. It's a process, but first we need to set that intention.





for the beauty of the relationship, and for who the person is. It's a process, but first we need to set that intention.

When we start to work on a hotline, the conditioned trap is "I want to help them." That's why the training is nearly a year because we learn to decondition our habit of wanting to "save" the other. We all have this tendency, believing that helping the other is a good way to be in a relationship, without contemplating the value of first simply showing genuine presence.

Ravi: How much is it intention versus attention? I think a lot of times the intent is the best, but if we are not able to yoke our attention to it, we fail in what we are trying to achieve. What are your thoughts there?

Mark: I think they go together. Intention is about the priority of our values, including: Can you see clearly why you are listening to someone? Can you be honest about what you are trying to get out of this relationship, or not? You want to distinguish between listening to someone, because maybe emotionally they're not doing very well, versus being able to truly listen to someone.

When you develop that empathy, that compassion, even in a business relationship where the listening is based on mutual interests and how you can get something, you can still bring the intention of being

fair, of making sure that you're in a true win-win relationship. This dimension of listening brings you the awareness of your intention. Of course, you need attention, which allows you to deliver focus, keeping in mind the questions, "Am I really focused? Do I have discernment of what's happening?"

Ravi: Nice. I find that in listening, as in many other things, the saying "familiarity breeds contempt" plays a role. In spousal relationships, with family members, even colleagues that we've known for a long time, as we get more familiar, we take each other for granted. This creates a barrier in effectively listening to someone. What are your thoughts on this, and

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personally, how do you deal with it?

Mark: Our biggest barriers in listening are the concepts we have, our beliefs, our points of view, and our opinions. We're fast at drawing conclusions because the mind likes to know where it's going. It can be very useful of course; in life we need to make decisions. But it can cut us off from being surprised every day by the people we've known for years. Even biologically and physically, every seven years we change a lot, we are not completely the same human beings. So if we can look at each other and listen to each other

afresh, honoring life and allowing ourselves to continually be surprised, it is a gift. *Authenticity begins when comparison ends*. As soon as the story of the other resonates for us, there is a risk of comparing and not meeting them in their unique experience.

Ravi: How much of listening outside has to do with listening inside? You mentioned being mindful, and meditation as a key to creating a pause between yourself and your thoughts, and that pause creating an opportunity. How much is the inner game influencing the outer game?

Mark: It is completely interdependent, and it starts inside. You can't listen to others better than you can listen to yourself. Take again the suicide prevention hotline; you can straight away observe that your comfort or discomfort listening to someone is completely related to the relationship you have with yourself, with their topic or subject, and the projections you have on them. You are your main tool when you're listening. You can't develop your listening without self-awareness. It is an ongoing process, a life process; even though people get diplomas, it is a never-ending story. Life is

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Ravi: Roger Fisher and Daniel
Shapiro from the Harvard
Negotiation Project, in their book
Beyond Reason, talk about how
we are emotional beings walking
around pretending to be rational
beings. Ultimately emotions play
a role in every conversation and
every situation, so what you said
resonates.

Shifting gears, I know you worked with Dr. Marshall Rosenberg and the Nonviolent Communication movement. How did that influence you from a listening perspective, and what are one or two lessons you took away from that experience?

Mark: I learned a lot from him. When I met him in 2000 I had already been managing the suicide prevention hotline in Switzerland for six years, and I felt that a piece of the puzzle was missing. The training we went through for volunteers was based on the work of Carl Rogers, one of the pioneers in humanistic psychology who developed concepts of empathy and congruence, and Marshall was his student. When I met Marshall, I appreciated that he came with the understanding that this is not just about listening, it is about communication. The way we listen relates to how we communicate. He broke important ground in the history of psychology. He wanted

to broaden the work Carl Rogers was doing for the medical world, for doctors and nurses. He wanted to continue Carl's work, but make it accessible to everyone.

He made it very clear that our emotions are the tip of the iceberg. They are like lights telling us something is comfortable or uncomfortable inside, and they are threads to inner needs. The descriptions of these needs were already developed by Abraham Maslow and others. All our emotions are an expression of inner needs, which are either met or not met, and this connection between emotions and needs brought a lot of clarity for me.

When we understand how to connect the needs behind emotions, it creates a shift in consciousness. It allows us to take full responsibility for our emotions, and stops us from being victims, blaming others and life's situations. It also helps us to listen to others, hear their emotions, and go to the underlying needs; that is where discernment can happen.

That's one dimension, and the other dimension is the process he put together. Making the connection between emotions and needs is useful in crisis and mediation. First, there is the importance of being able to make clear observations with no judgments. The topic of true observation has been covered



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by the beautiful work of J.

Krishnamurti. Marshall's work led from the observation dimension, to look at the emotions, the needs connected with those emotions, and then to see the requests that the needs translate into. He put together a very simple yet powerful and deep process that is helping millions of people today.

Ravi: In many ways, I think he went to second-order changes (changing the person versus the behavior). Clearly, you are someone who has done a lot of deep work in this area, you have thought a lot about it, you've learned a lot, and practiced a lot. It requires a high degree of alertness because you can easily slip; it doesn't matter how good you are, you can slip!

Have you come away from an interaction and felt, "Oh gosh, I didn't really listen well. Here's what I should have done"? It is easy for somebody who is sloppy, but if you scale that mountain and then you slip, how do you deal with that?

Mark: I have developed some helpful tools, which I am now teaching and transmitting, and the book I'm writing is exposing these. The book's current title is *Being Before Doing*, and the first thing I invite readers to do is become aware of the quality of their presence. Between the morning when we wake up and the night

It's important for me that even if I have something difficult to say, I am truly authentic, first with myself, then with the other. Then I use language where the other is going to feel respected and motivated to keep the connection.

when we go to bed, the quality of our presence fluctuates. True for all of us. Of course, some people are amazing and just stay at the top level of presence all day, but they're rare, I haven't met many.

The first thing is to acknowledge that the quality of our presence fluctuates and then to observe without judgment its movement. Then we start to explore what it means to be fully present, and what it means to not be present. What does "being" mean for me? What does being present mean? It's important that we find our own definitions without comparing with others.

I have developed an instrument called the Relational Compass, where there are four basic states of presence in which we fluctuate throughout the day. We can identify where we are, in terms of connection with ourselves, connection with others, and connection with life. As we embrace this, we observe and bring attention to these fluctuations. We get to know ourselves more from an observational point of view than an analytical point of view. We then take into consideration that others are also in one of those places, which eventually leads to compassion.

Ravi: That is very insightful, and I can't wait to read the book.
When are you targeting to have it out?

Mark: The second part of the year.

Ravi: I'm excited about it. It sounds like deep work and different work from what's out there.

Mark: I hope the book will allow people to discover how to deepen and widen their listening, from a non-analytical point of view, as a starting point for self-observation, and observation of the relation. Also, I've discovered that when we reach a certain space of listening, our language changes. We start to develop what I call authentic and inclusive language.

Ravi: Fascinating! I noticed that about you during this interview; you practice what you preach. Your language was thoughtful and inclusive. The cadence was different. Does this have something to do with what you've developed yourself?

Mark: Yes, what I'm sharing is what I have developed for myself. It's important for me that even if I have something difficult to say, I am truly authentic, first with myself, then with the other. Then I use language where the other is going to feel respected and motivated to keep the

Becoming better listeners, developing our compassion and openness to the difference of others, opens our hearts. I experience that the more my heart is open and available to truly listen to others, the more I feel connected to life with a capital L. I'm also connected and listening to the source of Life.



connection. It's related to Marshall Rosenberg's work, and I'm bringing in another angle.

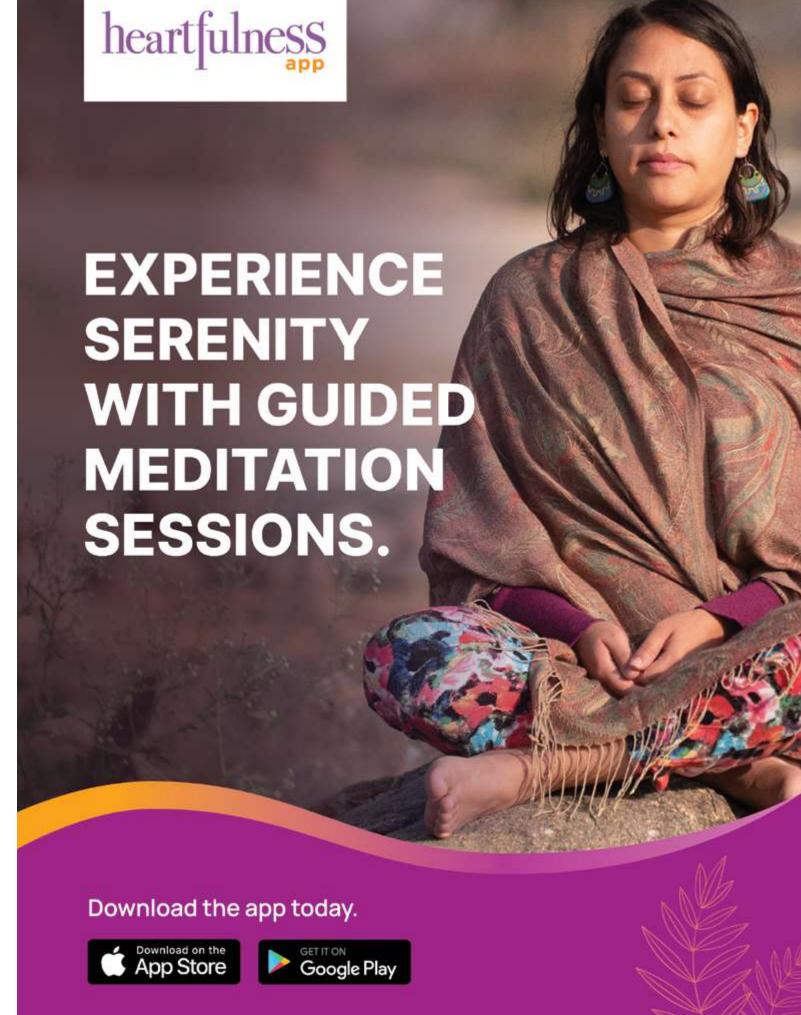
Ravi: One concept that's often talked about is that when you listen inside and you go deep enough, you hear a voice that's beyond or above yourself. So, what role does faith or belief in something beyond ourselves play in tuning ourselves to be better listeners? More specifically, has that played a role for you?

Mark: Becoming better listeners, developing our compassion and openness to the difference of others, opens our hearts. I experience that the more my heart is open and available to truly listen to others, the more I feel connected to life with a capital L. I'm also connected and listening to the source of Life. As Rumi beautifully said, "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing, there is a field. I'll meet you there."

Ravi: Well, I couldn't have asked for a better set of ideas to start my series, The Heartful Listener.

Mark: Thank you, Ravi.

Ravi: Thank you, Mark!



A Model School Heartfulness Lounge



MEENU KHURANA is the Heartfulness Lounge Facilitator at one of the flagship schools of Delhi Government, Sarvodaya School, Sector-8, Rohini, New Delhi. She manages the relationship with the school and all volunteer teams, and here shares a glimpse of the program in action.

n December 12th, 2023, the new Heartfulness Lounge was inaugurated at New Delhi's Sarvodaya School, Sector-8, Rohini. The commencement came with the blessings of Daaji, the Global Guide of Heartfulness, and the support of Mr. Himanshu Gupta, IAS, Education Secretary of Delhi, alongside Principal Mr. Awdesh Kumar Jha and Vice Principal Mrs. Bharti Kalra.

The lounge currently operates three days a week (Wednesday through Friday) from 12 to 2 P.M.,

offering sessions for students, faculty and parents. Initially catering to students in classes 6 to 9, the program has expanded to include Heartfulness sessions for classes 11 and 12, encompassing both the HELP program and introductory meditation sessions.

The lounge is supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who facilitate these programs regularly. Plans are underway to host Sunday group meditations for parents, students, and teachers at the lounge.



Testimonials

Since the opening of the Heartfulness Lounge, students have been participating in the programs conducted by the volunteers here and we have seen an increased sense of peace in the minds of those children. This reflects in their behavior as well. When there is peace in the mind, I believe that all these children will move towards success in their lives by building their own personalities. So that they can help in building a peaceful society and take the country towards progress.

—Awdesh Kumar Jha, Principal

In the lounge which has been launched by Heartfulness Institute, many things are being taught which we've missed in our school. Personality development courses, in which very practical topics like knowing your goal and how to achieve it, time management, power of thought, courage and self-

confidence as well as connecting with oneself, etc. are taught which are useful for them as children of course, but will also prove to be very useful for their later life when they leave school.

Children are very stressed at this age and face very emotional situations, so in the activities conducted in the Heartfulness Lounge, we have observed that children become more calm, their stress reduces and they are able to handle situations in a better way. We have also observed that after attending these Heartfulness courses, our children are now more confident and ready for the outside world.

Thanks to the success of these courses, we have now started 'Parvarish' programs for parents also in collaboration with Heartfulness, the first session of which was loved by all the parents.

—Bharti Kalra, Vice-Principal

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We sent the children of 11th and 12th grades, whose anxiety levels about their studies and futures had increased a lot, to the Heartfulness Lounge. The exercises that were conducted, such as relaxation and meditation, have helped develop a sense of peace as well as confidence in these children. Their focus has increased, and the hidden power within them has also come out. I have also witnessed an increased coordination in their decisionmaking abilities. It's great to see how the Heartfulness Lounge has helped children develop their Student (Shaurya XII-B) mind, body and soul. -Nidhi Ma'am, School Coordinator

Student **Testimonials**

After regularly attending their sessions I noticed some positive changes in myself. I was able to sleep properly.

Recently ended up

Student (Shalvika Sharma XI-F)

I was a part of the 3 day session and needless to say, these 3 days were more than enough for me to realize how just 5 minutes of meditation could significantly change the emotional course of my day.

It was wonderful to experience the Heartfulness session! In just 10 minutes we felt so relaxed. In my opinion, everyone needs this. We would love to do these sessions again and again. — Parent of Sarvodaya School Student

It helps met me to know my ability, strength, capabillity and all those things which helps me to achieve my goal.

Student (Pritam XI-E)

PRITAM The session of heartfullness was very relaring session. I attended all three sessions respectively. In the first session, Two mams describes us about our Goals, wishes, ambition and aspiration. knew about all of them but only something When mam explain this four things then I know very much about them deeply. I understand the difference between goals and wishes as well as ambition and aspiration. Then next day in second session, another two mas mams came and tells about 'Smart Goals' which is very important to know for us. In all sessions, at the end of session we all doing meditation Heartfullness relaxation is very important By this we can relaxing our mind and body als



March 2025 Heartfulness



A samskara is a blockage, an impression from the past. It's an unfinished energy pattern that ends up running your life.

MICHAEL A. SINGER

What is Love? Once More



DR. ICHAK ADIZES observes how his understanding of love has evolved, and explores the question, "How can we develop love?"

or years I have been promoting the theory that change causes disintegration, and disintegration is manifested in what we call problems. The solution to problems caused by disintegration is integration based on mutual trust and respect. Mutual trust enables symbiosis; we contribute because we trust that others will contribute to the system too, so we will all benefit from the contribution we made. And when there is mutual respect, we learn from each other's differences, and create synergy.

A sustainable solution to problems caused by disintegration is integration, for which we need to create and nurture a culture of mutual trust and respect. And I reasoned, absolute integration is absolute mutual trust and respect, and that is LOVE. And love solves all problems, as my mother used to say. I was wrong.

Trust and respect are processes we run through our brain; I respect you because I can learn from you, and I trust you because we have common interest. Great. Good But that is not love. Love is not computing what you get out of a relationship: Do we have common interest so I can trust you, and will I learn from you if I respect your difference of opinion? Love is not sexual attractiveness and passion either. Those are physiological feelings. Love is based on compassion, on caring with no benefits expected.

In the Jewish religion, a true donation is made with love and that means anonymously, to expect nothing in return. No expectations of getting benefits from giving is what makes love different from all other feelings and actions.

There are three levels of integration. The lowest is via the Administrator role, with rules,

policies, and instructions created outside the system on which it is imposed. It is based on power, on punishments for violations. The next level is an organic integration based on mutual trust and respect. It is not externally created and enforced. It is the result of reasoning and searching for selfbenefits: Can I learn from you and thus make better decisions, and do we have a common interest so I do not doubt your contributions? The highest level of integration is when we integrate with no selfinterest. We integrate because we are loving persons. And if God is absolute love, then if we integrate with love, with the highest level of integration, we are an extension of God, we are part and parcel of God.

How can we develop love? We know how to do lower levels of integration. Love on the other hand is evasive. In love we care for the other person as if they are



us. Imagine a very sick child. In my Sephardic tradition a parent would say, "Yo para ti" meaning, "I wish I could take your place and your pain instead of you." Loving relationships remind me of Francis Bacon, the philosopher who said that a good friend is someone who doubles our happiness and cuts in half our sorrow or pain. They are not just an acquaintance but a loving friend.

Love cultivates the space between us so that we share the oneness. In love we do not fight the differences, underneath there is oneness. A friend of mine, a student of film, told me that when he becomes a director he wants to produce a movie for children with the following story: There is a kingdom where the king has one daughter he loves very much. In this kingdom all people by law must carry a mask that communicates their profession.

One has a mask of a doctor, another of a thief, let us say. The daughter becomes very sick and is dying. She asks her father a last wish to ask all people to take their masks off. Loving his daughter, he orders it. As people take their masks down, it becomes evident that they all have the same face—the thief and the doctor. The message is that at the core we are all the same. We have our masks that identify our differences, but with love we recognize our oneness.

Heartfulness Guru, Chariji, said love is a muscle. Start loving, and the more you practice love the more you have it. Start giving without expecting. In other words, developing love is an experiential process. It cannot be learned with lectures or with love poems. Love is in the doing. Why practicing love encourages you to have more love, I don't know. Your turn.

The highest level of integration is when we integrate with no self-interest. We integrate because we are loving persons.

Just thinking and feeling,

Ichak K. Adizes

Ichak K. Adizes ichak@adizes.com

https://www.ichakadizes.com/post/what-is-love-once-more

I want to recognize and appreciate the contributions of Professor Raj Sisodia, leader of the Conscious Capitalism movement, who pointed out to me that love is more than Mutual Trust and Respect, and includes care and compassion, and Topaz Adizes, the founder of {The And} experiences, who pointed out to me that love is born when the space between people is recognized and cultivated.

Holding Close Without Holding On



NEGIN KHORASANI shares her thoughts on loving in relationships, and the importance of letting go of expectations, attachments, and possessiveness; holding close without holding on.

RELATIONSHIPS

ave you ever noticed how even our most loving relationships can feel overwhelming? While they bring deep nourishment, we often find ourselves needing space and time to recover from their intensity. No matter how much we connect with those we cherish—our parents, siblings, close friends—it can sometimes feel as though their expectations never end. The more we give, the more is expected.

I've come to understand that this is because, with every sweet connection, we fuel the fire of craving more. Instead of love flowing freely, it can turn into attachment—a bond that drains rather than uplifts.

The hidden weight of attachment

Attachment is like an invisible cord that ties us to others, keeping them in our mental space whether they are near or far. If a loved one is struggling, we carry their pain as our own. If they are sick, we feel their sickness in our hearts. Even if our own life is in balance, we cannot fully experience peace because their troubles weigh on us.

We often hear mothers say, "I worry about my child because I love them." But is this love, or is it attachment? True love does not burden—it liberates.



Love versus attachment: Understanding the difference

Love is made of *care and* understanding. When we truly love someone, caring for them feels natural and effortless. If they need food, we offer it. If they need support, we give it, without counting the cost. Love asks for nothing in return. It is selfless, flowing like a river, nourishing without conditions.

Understanding is another key component of love. A parent doesn't take a child's mistakes personally because they see the child is still growing. An elderly mother, in her wisdom, is happy when her children are busy building their lives, even if

they cannot visit as often as she wishes. This is true love—giving, forgiving, and allowing.

The trap of attachment

Attachment, on the other hand, is conditional. We give, but we expect something in return. We help, but we want appreciation. We love, but we seek validation. This expectation inevitably leads to disappointment because it ties our happiness to someone else's actions—something beyond our control.

Even when we do great favors for others, if they come with unspoken expectations, they can feel like invisible shackles. *Love is freedom*. *Attachment is possession*.

The secret to boundless love

When we love without attachment, we give wholeheartedly in the moment—whether it's our time, care, or effort—and then we *let go.* We do what needs to be done, fully present and engaged, but once the moment has passed, we free our minds and hearts. We don't carry the emotional residue of our actions, nor do we dwell on whether our love was acknowledged or reciprocated.

This openness allows us to remain attuned to the next person or situation that may need our care. When our mental space is clear, we can sense the world's needs

and respond with love again and again. This is why one saint can carry the burden of an entire nation—because they don't hold on. They give, they move on, and they remain available. Their love is infinite because it is not weighed down by attachment.

Loving few versus loving all

When we love with attachment, we can only love a few—our energy is limited because we are entangled in expectations, emotional burdens, and the need for reciprocation. But when we love without attachment, we become free to love *all*.

A person who practices loving detachment does not run out of love because they do not cling to any particular bond. Their love flows limitlessly, extending to family, friends, strangers, and even those who may never return their affection. They can care for many without exhaustion, simply because they are not trying to *hold* love, only to *be* love.

To love fully and freely, we must practice loving detachment— caring deeply while allowing others the space to be themselves. It means supporting without controlling, giving without expecting, and holding close without holding on.

When we detach with love, we free not only ourselves but also those we care for. And in that freedom, love flourishes—not just for a few, but for all.

we care for. And in that freedom, love flourishes—not just for a few but for all.

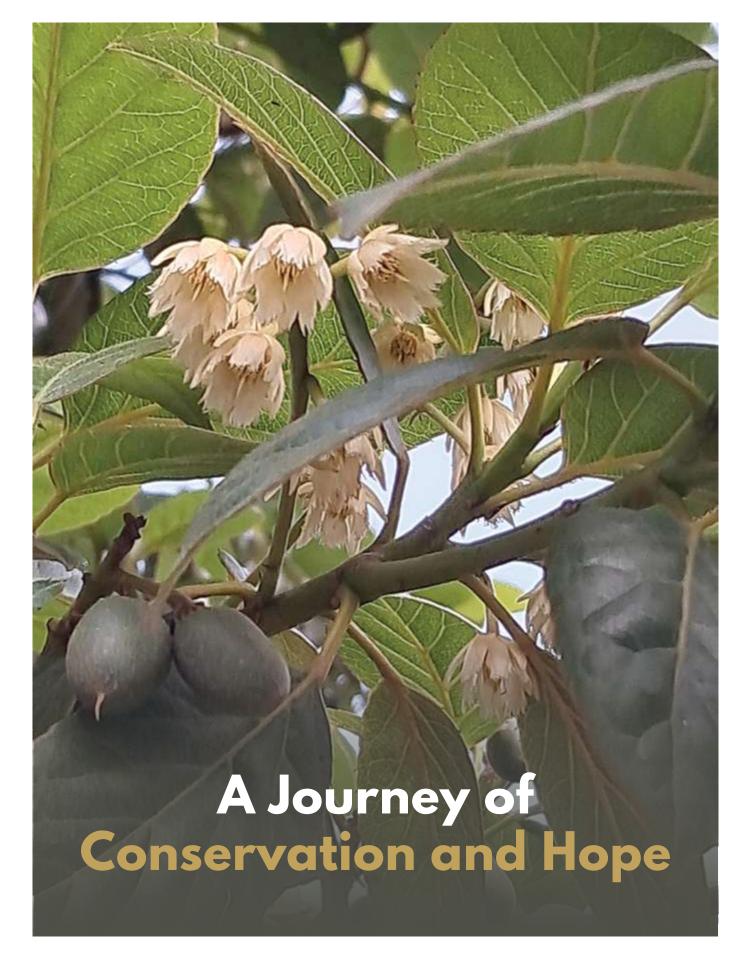
When we detach with love, we free not only ourselves but also those we care for. And in that freedom, love flourishes—not just for a few, but for all.





God desires
that all the world
be pure in his sight.
The earth should not be injured.
The earth should not be destroyed.

HILDEGARD VON BINGEN



B. RATHINASABAPATHY, ecologist, Forests by Heartfulness (FBH), shares a heart-warming tale about a rare rainforest tree species that has been brought back from the brink. It gives us hope that with a little bit of care and concern, other extinctions can be prevented.

n the depths of Tamil Nadu's rainforests lies a tree so rare that it is represented by just three known specimens—the Palani Hill Rudraksha (Elaeocarpus blascoi)."

The enigmatic Elaeocarpus blascoi, commonly referred to as the Palani Hill Rudraksha, is among the rarest known plant species on Earth. With its native habitat confined to the pristine rainforests of Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, at the southern tip of India, this critically endangered tree has intrigued botanists and conservationists alike. Today, only three known adult specimens exist: two on a private estate and one in the wild.

A glimpse into the past

Discovered in the 20th century, E. blascoi quickly gained attention for its rarity and ecological significance. Its survival has since been jeopardized by deforestation, habitat fragmentation, and natural germination challenges. The seeds of E. blascoi often fail to thrive due to harsh environmental conditions, including soil erosion and water runoff that wash them out of the Dindigul Plain.

A turning point: conservation initiatives

In 2006, two saplings of E. blascoi, affectionately named Bob and Tanya, were planted to bolster the



ENVIRONMENT

species' survival. These saplings flourished, thanks to the dedicated efforts of conservationists, and symbolized the possibility of restoring the species.

The Heartfulness Institute took a decisive step in 2022 by launching a structured conservation program for E. blascoi. Recognizing the critical need to secure its future, the program adopted tissue culture techniques to propagate the species and ensure genetic diversity.

At FBH, we understand that conserving E. blascoi goes beyond preserving a rare tree species. It's a commitment to safeguarding biodiversity and maintaining ecological balance. Our multidisciplinary team has been working tirelessly to:

- Develop propagation techniques: Tissue culture technology has emerged as a beacon of hope, allowing us to propagate E. blascoi under controlled conditions.
- Create suitable habitats:
 By mimicking the natural rainforest ecosystem,
 we aim to provide ideal growth conditions for young saplings.

• Engage the community: Awareness programs and educational initiatives are crucial for fostering a collective sense of responsibility toward conservation efforts.

Challenges and triumphs

The journey of conserving E. blascoi is not without its challenges. The species' natural germination rate is low, and ensuring successful transplantation requires meticulous care. Yet, each thriving sapling represents a victory for nature and humanity.



In collaboration with global and local partners, we are witnessing the fruits of these efforts. The sight of birds and insects returning to habitats with E. blascoi reinforces the interconnectedness of life and the vital role this species plays in its ecosystem.

A call to action

The story of E. blascoi is a testament to the resilience of nature and the impact of human determination. As we strive to bring this species back from the brink, we invite individuals, institutions, and governments to join hands in conserving our natural heritage.

Together, we can ensure that future generations marvel at the majestic Palani Hill Rudraksha, not as a relic of the past but as a thriving testament to our collective commitment to biodiversity conservation.

"The survival of Elaeocarpus blascoi is more than a conservation effort; it is a symbol of humanity's ability to restore what we have endangered. Let us act now for the future of this majestic tree, and the world it inhabits rests in our hands."

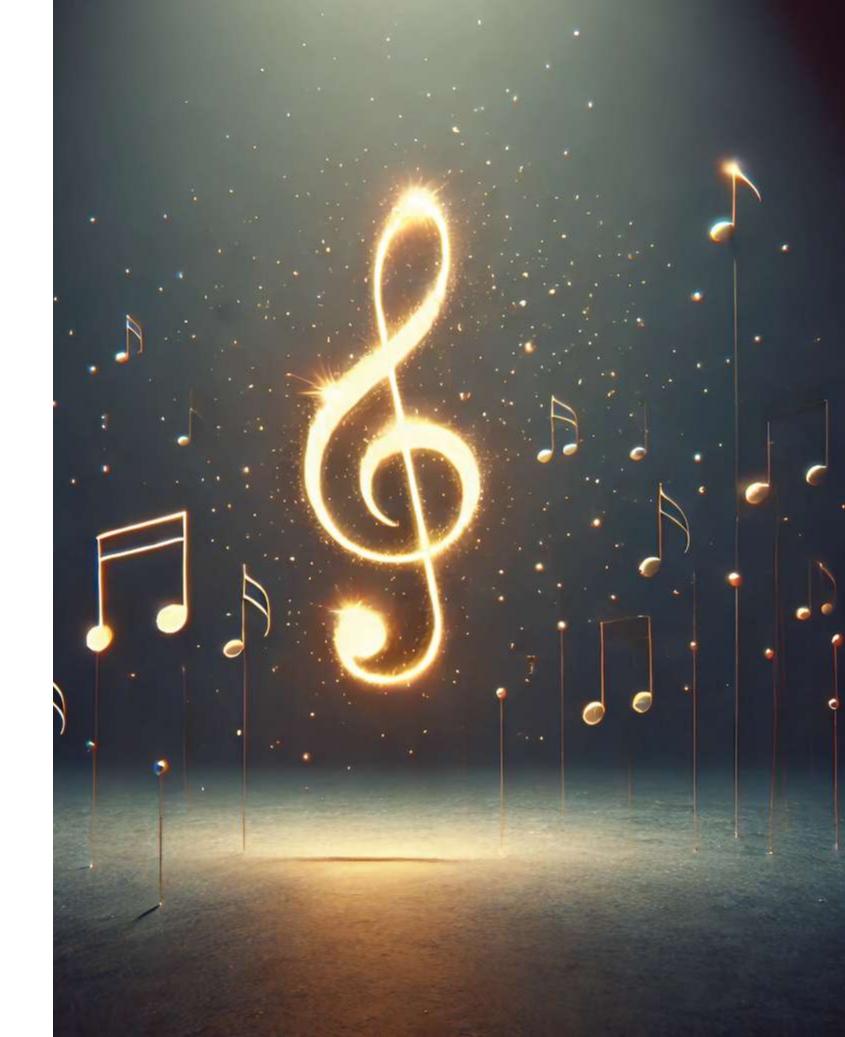




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Simplicity is the final achievement.
After one has played a vast
quantity of notes and more notes,
it is simplicity that emerges as the
crowning reward of art.

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN



CREATIVITY



Great Indian Hornbill



Painted Stork

RAJESH MENON is a nature photographer and artist based in Delhi, who travels to some of the most beautiful and remote parts of India to celebrate the wildlife of the southern Asian subcontinent. Here we showcase just a few from his portfolio of the birds of the Himalayan foothills, Delhi, and Pondichery.

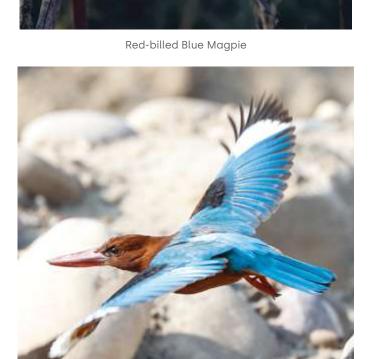


Oriental Pied Hornbill



Black-rumped Flameback





White-breasted Kingfisher



Black Stork

Purple Swamphen

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CREATIVITY



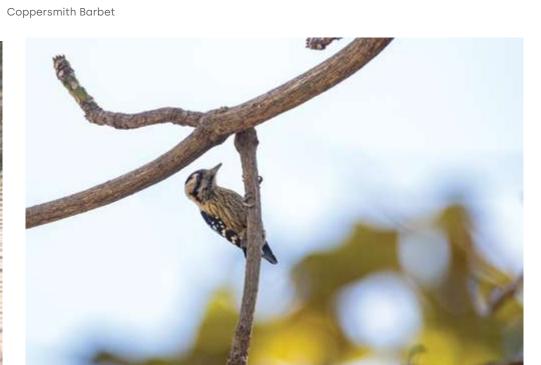




Black-crested Bulbul



Painted Stork



Gray-capped Pigmy Woodpecker



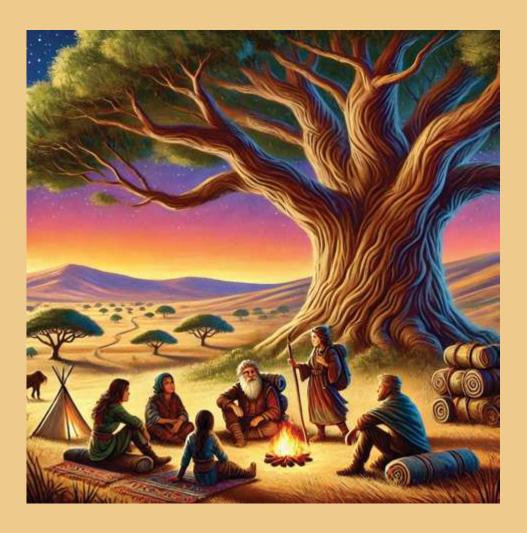


Paradise Flycatcher

We tell stories to make sense of things. It's in our blood.

LIA HILLS





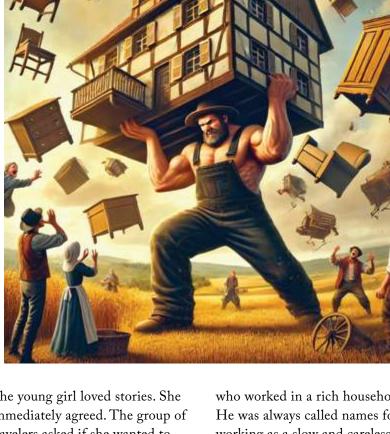
THE TALE OF TALES

This World Storytelling Day, March 20, we bring you a story by SARA BUBBER, based on a common folk template. May the stories within the story entertain you!

Stories have been a tool in the passage of rites from one generation to the next since time immemorial. Entertainment, knowledge, wisdom, and education was passed down in the form of stories.

nce upon a time, the
Earth was an open
canvas. People lived a
nomadic life. Traveling from one
place to another for food, shelter,
and clothing was a common sight.
With no radio, television, and
phones the only way to entertain
each other was to tell stories.
Stories about new roots, giant
trees, and scary tigers. Travelers
were given lodging in exchange for
stories, work could also be done by
telling stories.

One such day, a group of friends were traveling. After a long day they were tired and were trying to decide who would fetch firewood and cook for the group. They tried many ways of deciding but then saw a young girl who was coming the same way. They thought they could get her to cook for them while they rested. They asked her where she was from and if she cared to listen to some stories.



The young girl loved stories. She immediately agreed. The group of travelers asked if she wanted to make the story session interesting. They placed a little bet. The travelers would tell the girl a story that was absolutely impossible. If the girl said that the story was impossible, she would have to cook food. The bet also went the other way. The young girl would tell a story, and if the travelers would say that it was impossible, they would cook for her instead.

The story session began.

One of the travelers started: "My grandfather was a poor farmer

who worked in a rich household. He was always called names for working as a slow and careless worker. He prayed to God every day. However much he tried, he couldn't work faster and was scolded endlessly. One day, the God he prayed to appeared in front of him and when he woke he had great strength. The next day as he was scolded, the energy he had felt rushed through his veins, he grew in size, lifted the house, and took a big leap. The house shook, the cupboards fell, the beds flew out and the windows shattered. He kept flying high until his employer begged him to stop. His employer not only stopped calling him

CHILDREN



names but also gave him the place of a family member.

"How was the story? Does someone disagree?"
No one disagreed.

Another traveler continued:

"Once there was a famine in my grandfather's land. My grandfather was a very weak person. One day, in a fight with his brother, he had to leave home. He thought of finding fame for himself. He walked into a forest and came across a man painting. He painted a deer and, as my grandfather continued watching, to his surprise

the deer came alive. He thought it was such an amazing device, that he wanted to possess it. When he got the chance, he went ahead and painted a boat with the owner of the brush in it. He added winds on the lake and blew the owner away. Now he had full possession of the paintbrush. He took the brush back and painted clouds and grains which solved the problems of his village. He became the treasurer of the village and one day, he created a son from the paintbrush. He was so exceptional that there was no girl to match him. Then he created a fully grown young girl as a match for his son. And thus,

I was born from parents who were painted. The brush is gone, but it seems like my smooth hair is a gift from the paintbrush. I use the best herbs from the best orchard that my grandfather painted.

"This is my story, do you agree?"
"Yes we all do."

Now it was the little girl's turn. She began her story.

"My grandparents possessed many things. They were well respected in their community, and helped many people achieve greatness. They possessed hulk-like strength and various magical possessions. One day, in a civil strife, the servants of the house ran away with the chest of hulk strength and some of the

magical possessions like a wishgranting paintbrush. My parents looked for it all their life, and today I set off in search. I have finally found all my family possessions with you. It seems you are the long lost servants of our family who have our possessions.

"This is the end of my story. Do you agree?"

"Yes we do."

The little girl continued, "That is wonderful news, now, give my possessions back."

"But... no we do not agree," said the group.

"Oh, then you must cook for me." And the little girl, using her wit, rested as the team cooked for her.



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT STORIES

AESOP'S FABLES

Aesop was a slave who lived in ancient Greece. He wanted freedom more than anything else. He noticed the supervisor of slaves and began to tell stories every day. The supervisor was impressed and one day asked Aesop what he wanted. Aesop asked for food for all his fellow slaves. His selfless gesture made the supervisor give Aesop and his community the freedom they deserved. These tales were combined into the Aesop's Fables that you have all loved growing up!

GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES

Grimms' Fairy Tales is a German collection of fairy tales by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, first published on December 20, 1812. It is considered the seminal work of Western children's literature and is listed by <u>UNESCO</u> in its <u>Memory of the World Registry</u>.

PANCHATANTRA

Panchatantra is a collection of stories from ancient India based on politics, behavior, communication, and economics. These stories are based on the Vedas, Upanishads, the Ramayana and Mahabharata as a trove of wisdom. The princes of Amarasakti had no interest in pursuing their studies and thus a teacher, Vishnu Sharma, made a comprehensive manual for these princes to be taught in the form of stories. The Panchatantra started the story within a story form of learning, which delights young readers to this day.



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Write your own story here. It can involve animals, kings, kingdoms, humans, plants, or anything else that tells a story. Create a story with a beginning, some problems that come up, and a solution to end the story:

Heartfulness



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ENROLL TODAY!

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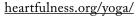
heartfulness

Master the habit of meditation

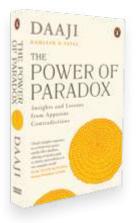
The Heartfulness app offers daily practices to awaken the potential for a joyful existence. Download it at heartfulnessapp.org

Heartfulness Yoga Teacher Training Course

Learn to teach the eight limbs of yoga. Merge the traditional art of yoga with a modern professional approach.







The Power of Paradox by Daaji

The book is an exploration of twenty-two every day paradoxes combined with spiritual and scientific enquiry. Paired with the Heartfulness way of living, these practices will help one clear the mind and unburden emotions of the heart. https://hfn.li/pop

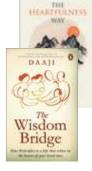


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Publications by Daaji

#1 BESTSELLERS

How meditative practices lead to changes in lifestyle, both personal and in relationships, which lead to greater freedom in designing our destiny.

designingdestiny.com theheartfulnessway.com spiritualanatomy.com thewisdombridge.com



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We are planting millions of trees across India



